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THTR 517.01: Graduate Physical Performance: Problems in Movement

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Graduate Physical Performance: Problems in movement THTR 517
Fall 2014 T/TH: 11:10-12.30 SG 123
Dr. Bernadette Sweeney McGill 212.c
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12.30-2.10pm

AIM: Psychophysical approaches to performance have become a central part of our discipline. In this course we will engage with psychophysical approaches to the performance of selected plays by W.B. Yeats.

OUTCOMES:

Actors will

- develop and extend their awareness of psychophysical practices and methodologies, with reference to the training techniques of Michael Chekhov, Pan Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski and others.
- Develop a strong ensemble.
- Develop and extend physical skills in movement, gesture, use of space, proxemics, mask work and rhythm.
- Develop and extend vocal skills in working with Yeatsian verse, dialogue, music and poetry
- Broaden their understanding and analysis of the drama of W.B. Yeats and its cultural context, Irish mythologies, postcolonial drama,
- Develop work in the studio for *Performance*
- Engage with music in the studio, created by the ensemble
- Choose appropriate psychophysical techniques to lead the group in an approach to a section of text
- Apply this material in leading the ensemble at a particular point in our process

CONTENT:

In this course students will use psychophysical approaches to stage a selection of Yeats' plays in the studio setting. This will involve ensemble building, movement and gesture work, research into the context and content of these plays, a consideration of postcolonial drama on the page and as embodied by the actor, music, voice and mask work.

FOUR PLAYS FOR DANCERS by W.B. Yeats – AVAILABLE ONLINE:

<https://archive.org/details/fourplaysfordanc00yet>

EXPECTATIONS:

Each actor is required to:

- Attend every class on time
- Commit to all exercises and assignments with effort
- Respect their body, their classmates, the environment and the process
- Consistently work toward creating an open and safe atmosphere for everyone working
- Take creative risks and support class peers as they do the same
- Take on roles of ensemble leadership and guidance as directed
- Keep up to date with documentation and *commit to this process as a creative part of the process rather than just a regimented reporting of it.*

EVALUATION:

Final grade: 50% - process work, participation, ensemble leadership, attendance and performance
50% - documentation and reflection

POLICY:

No eating or chewing gum. Drink water only please and wear appropriate movement attire to class. Please turn phones off, and be mindful that if you are injured or feeling delicate it is fine to observe only for that session.

Attendance and Promptness

Acting is participatory: there is no way to learn without doing, no adequate substitute for a missing partner, and no way to “make up” a missed experience. School policies will be strictly enforced. Only documented absences will be excused. No student may miss more than one week of class. For every subsequent absence, the grade will be lowered a full letter grade.

Furthermore, besides adversely affecting your own learning, arriving late for class disrupts the learning process of your fellow students. Therefore, tardiness in excess of 10 minutes will be considered a complete absence, and every three instances of tardiness—of whatever duration—will equate to one absence. Every acting teacher reserves the right to declare a “no lateness” policy, should the need arise. Briefly put, this means that if the door to the class is shut and you are not inside by the time class begins, you are absent. No exceptions.

If an illness should cause you to miss excessive class time to the point of failing, **it is your responsibility** to pursue a medical withdrawal so that the course may be attempted again once you have recovered.

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance *Student Handbook*. The *Handbook* is available online at <http://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/About/handbook.php>.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop time, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance do so at their own risk.

Due to safety considerations, at **no** point during a student’s time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student **without my consent**. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student’s grade.

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.